GOVERNOR HITS 'DRAGGING'

Ohio Extradition Conduct Rapped

By BILL LYNCH 5/5/67
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—There is evidence that the state is not getting complete cooperation from Ohio in the extradition of Gordon Novel, wanted in the Garrison investigation of the Kennedy assassination, Gov. John J. McKeithen said today.

Ohio Gov. James Rhodes, it was revealed by the States-Item yesterday, wants assurances that Novel won't be questioned on the Kennedy slaying if he is returned on a warrant charging him with a burglary conspiracy.

Novel, now living in Columbus, Ohio, has been fighting New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's efforts to bring him back to Louisiana on the conspiracy charge and in connection with his investigation of the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

GOV. MCKEITHEN said that although he has tried recently to confer with Gov. Rhodes in Ohio about the issue by telephone, he has been unable to reach him.

He said that he had talked with the Northern governor by phone once or twice before.

"Now, I can't get him on the phone," McKeithen said. "I have never seen a man so busy in my life."

He said that he can reach an assistant, but not the governor.

"There is some evidence and some proof that we are not getting complete cooperation from the executive department in Ohio about extraditing Novel," the Louisiana governor said.

M'KEITHEN SAID that the last time he talked to an assistant of the Ohio governor, he asked point-blank if Ohio intended to let Louisiana have Novel. He said the assistant said that when the extradition papers were in order, the state of Ohio would turn him over to Louisiana.

After sending the extradition papers to Ohio once before, McKeithen said, he rereceived them back from Rhodes asking for more information about the charge. He said he assumed that's what the extradition papers were for.

McKeithen said he is pushing the extradition as hard as he can and has turned the actual work over to his executive counsel.

The governor also referred to questions about the extradition status of Sergio Aracacha Smith, who is being sought by Garrison for return to New Orleans from Dallas.

In addition to being wanted in Garrison's Kennedy death plot investigation, Novel is charged with four separate Louisiana criminal offenses, including the mysterious burglary of an oil service company's explosives dump at Houma in 1961.

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Today's Chuckle

A fool and his money are soon parted. The rest of us wait until income tax time.

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